

PLATEAU

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MOUNTAIN LIFE IN HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS NORTH CAROLINA

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The Waghornes were drawn to Lonesome Valley's ample hiking trails, beautiful lakes and other outdoor activities.

Valley Views

A cozy home for two in Lonesome Valley

By CHRISTINE HENNESSEY » Photos by DAVID DIETRICH

CAROLYN AND RICK WAGHORNE MET WHEN they were just nine years old and have been married for 58 years. In 1994, after their son began attending Camp Rockmont, the couple began making regular visits to the mountains of North Carolina. "One year we decided to drive him to camp and investigate the area, and a friend of Rick's suggested we look up the Wade Hampton Golf Club. We did, and the rest was history," Carolyn Waghorne says. "It was a wonderful experience and we lived there for almost 20 years."

A few years later, Rick was once again out with a friend, who asked if he'd ever been out to Lonesome Valley, a residential

mountain farm community known for celebrating simplicity and thoughtful stewardship. Rick had not. "He said, 'Come on,' and the next thing I know Rick has found a lot and we're buying it," Waghorne says. The first lot they purchased was higher in the valley. If they were going to move there, however, Waghorne preferred a lot located a bit lower. "When you're older, you don't want to drive up so high," she explains. They sold the first lot and bought a second one that better suited their lifestyle.

Even after purchasing two lots, the journey to building a home in Lonesome Valley still took some time. "We owned our lot for a few years before we decided to build. We wanted to be sure," Waghorne



Tall windows in the main living area offer stunning views of the canyon.

says. “We spent a lot of time out here, and we liked the people. There is something to be said for having a lot of younger people around you. It’s very relaxed, and there are a lot of hiking trails and the beautiful lakes.” Waghorne also liked that Lonesome Valley offered amenities other than golf, which was more Rick’s passion than hers. The ample hiking trails, beautiful lakes and opportunity to garden were also great activities for family and friends who visited the Waghornes. After a while, their choice became clear: Lonesome Valley was where they wanted to be.

When they were finally ready to build a house, they hired PLATT, a local architecture firm, to design the home, and Srebalus Construction Company to build it. They had worked with both firms in the past on previous projects and knew their future home would be in good hands.

“It was terrific working with them to build this house,” Waghorne says.

Local Legends

Srebalus Construction Company has been exceeding client expectations in the Highlands-Cashiers area since 1980 and offers everything from new home construction to additions to custom remodeling, as well as commercial construction. They are also a certified green builder. “I’ve been building in this area for over 40 years,” says Jerry Srebalus, owner and president. “I’m probably one of the original old school guys.”

“We do high-quality work, and we pride ourselves on being on time and on budget,” he adds. “These days we do a lot of high-end projects, and most take between a year and a half to two years to complete. It’s quite a commitment.” In addition to building homes, Srebalus also specializes in building friendships with both his colleagues as well as his clients. “I’ve got a longstanding staff,” he says. “My office manager Renee Farmer has been with me for 33 years, and my main project manager Cory Tilden has been with me for 26.”

When new clients first approach Srebalus Construction Company, they usually have a lot and a plan from an architect. Srebalus’ first step is to visit the lot and make sure the proposed plan makes sense and fits the location. “Most of the time in the mountains, you have to modify the plan based on terrain,” he explains. “Very rarely do people go to Southern Living and buy a stock plan that’s going to work for this area. We’ve got pretty strict codes and a lot of it depends on the elevation and local restrictions.”

Luckily, the Waghornes' plans were suited to their lot, thanks to Al and Parker Platt of PLATT, a full-service architecture, construction and interior design firm located in Brevard, NC, who designed the home. "The Waghornes had been clients of ours for several decades," says Al. "In Lonesome Valley, they were looking for a retreat to enjoy the amenities of the area and a guest space for their extended family."

The Waghornes wanted to build a home that fit their current needs and lifestyle, and that meant downsizing. "We did not want an extra-large house," Waghorne says. "Instead, we wanted a home with a beautiful view that was easy to access yet gave us a lot of privacy."

A Mountain Retreat

Because the Waghornes had previously had a guest house designed by Platt and built by Srebalus on the lot, it was easier to keep their main house smaller. The size, however, did not make the project any less complex. Because of the way Lonesome Valley is situated, it can be hard to capture the view from a lot like Waghornes', which was located at the bottom of the canyon. "It requires you to reach up with glass," says Parker, "but also has to strike a balance with the traditional mountain aesthetic that you find in Lonesome Valley." The design he created married those needs by including tall windows that offer stunning views of the canyon, while keeping the

house cozy and comfortable with classic mountain materials such as wood throughout the interior. The high glass also brings light into the living room from the east side, as well as beautiful afternoon light. "It's at its most charming in the afternoon," Al says.

"The house is about 3,200 square feet," Srebalus says. "It's got a unique timber frame of reclaimed hemlock timbers from Montana. There is no drywall in the home, only reclaimed and other wood finishes, as well as antique flooring and the stone exterior."

"We have a small space off the kitchen, and we have a built-in desk there and two easy chairs, a television and a window. We



There is no drywall in the home, only reclaimed and other wood finishes that create a warm and cozy atmosphere.



It can be hard to capture the view from a lot like the Waghornes', it requires you to reach up with glass.

spend a lot of time there watching TV and relaxing,” Waghorne says. “I also love the screened-in porch and the living room with the fabulous view.”

That view was intentional. “We help connect our clients to the mountains,” Parker says. “We try to listen to our clients, help them build homes for their families in ways that engage the mountains.” This was certainly the case for the Waghornes, who couldn’t be happier with how their cozy mountain retreat turned out, the lifestyle it offers them, or the beautiful views they enjoy.

The Waghornes were looking for a retreat to enjoy the amenities of the area and a guest space for their extended family.



“We are not people who nitpick over small details, and we’re trusting of our builder and architect,” Waghorne says. “When we put a house on the market, we want it to sell, and when we build, we want it to be built.” The secret to accomplishing this, she explains, is by hiring people like Platt and Srebalus—trusted professionals who, over time, also become friends.

For Srebalus, the project was a success on multiple levels. “We always enjoy working in Lonesome Valley; it’s such a spectacular place,” Srebalus says. “The experience of the great design from Al and Parker, to the look and feel of the house, to working with the Waghornes—it all created a really successful project. It’s probably one of my favorite houses, as well as my favorite clients, of my career.” ■

Resources

Home Builder:
Srebalus Construction Company Inc.
srebalusconstruction.com
828-743-3819

Home Design:
Platt
www.platt.us
828-884-2393



The screened-in porch with the fabulous view is one of the Waghornes' favorite places.